



Rep. Pat Scott

38th District

1997 Legislative Report Card

Dear Neighbor,

Lawmakers concluded the 105-day 1997 session on April 27. As usual, this report card gives a brief summary of the major decisions I made on your behalf this year as your state representative. This format allows you to see how I voted on the issues.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Patricia "Pat" Scott

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Representative Patricia “Pat” Scott – Voting Record for 1997 Session

Operating Budget — Legislators approved a \$19 billion General Fund Budget to pay for state programs for the next two years. The budget includes funding for education, social services, prisons, and natural resources. However, the budget fails to reward teachers and state employees with an adequate cost of living increase to keep pace with inflation. Despite a projected *\$1 billion* revenue surplus by the end of the biennium, the budget short-changes funding for education reform, basic health care for the working poor, and does not lower social service caseloads to prudent levels. Tax cuts were distributed among homeowners, business, and special interests. I did not feel the budget is a wise allocation of your taxpayer dollars. I voted **NO**.

Transportation — My main priority this year was to engineer a transportation plan that truly addresses the needs of our state. It seems our transportation problems worsen every day. Simply put, our transportation revenues no longer meet the needs of our growing economy and population. Commutes are getting longer and businesses are witnessing the erosion of our trade advantage as it becomes increasingly difficult to move goods and people over congested transportation systems. I believe we need an increase in the gas tax to pay for improvements to our infrastructure — in the greater Everett area, and across the state. In a bitter disappointment, the 1997 transportation budget failed to step up to this crisis. The final version approved by the Senate included far too little for me to support. I voted **NO**.

Juvenile Justice Reform — Our juvenile justice system has failed to respond to the changing violent and repetitive nature of today’s younger lawbreakers. In 1997, lawmakers approved sweeping reforms of the outdated juvenile justice system. Included is a provision to punish the most violent 16- and 17-year-olds in the adult system. The new law also provides additional rehabilitation and drug treatment to reduce future crime. Parents of juvenile offenders will be required to participate during all phases of the court process. I voted **YES**.

Welfare Reform — At long last, state lawmakers were given the freedom and opportunity by the federal government to reform our social safety net and remove burdensome rules and regulations. I strongly support Gov. Locke’s plan called WorkFirst which centers on work. The new system, which is now law, contains a 5-year benefit limit and requires able-bodied recipients to hold down a job and rewards responsible behavior with affordable child care for working parents.

Education Reform — Republican budget-writers refused to fully fund education reform. Student Learning Improvement Grants, which assist schools in meeting higher academic standards, were cut by \$19 million. Funds earmarked specifically for school-to-work programs were eliminated, and more than \$16 million in federal funds was refused. And, with the approval of SB 6072, elementary school students no longer will be required to learn history, geography, civics, art, health, or fitness. We must aim higher than this if we are to improve learning in our public schools.

Growth Management — Washington is now the sixth-fastest growing state in the nation. Another 400,000 people will live and work here by the year 2000. In 1990, lawmakers approved the Growth Management Act (GMA) to plan for the costs of development. Seven years later, it’s clear that we need to fine-tune the laws to provide additional flexibility and safeguard local control over growth. However, the majority party pushed for extreme changes to the law, ignoring the common sense recommendations of a citizen commission. I voted **NO**.

B&O Tax Cuts — Making good on a promise made during the fiscal crisis of 1993, we rolled back an increase in the Business & Occupation Tax. Democrats and Republicans worked together to provide tax-relief to service-oriented businesses like accountants, engineers, barbers, and computer consultants. I voted **YES**.

Property Tax Cuts — I joined House and Senate Democrats in endorsing the Homeowner’s Property Tax Credit which would give virtually every homeowner in our state a \$205 break on their annual property tax bill. Unfortunately, majority Republicans rejected this plan and instead approved an across-the-board 4.7 percent property tax reduction for businesses and homeowners. Under this plan, the average homeowner would only receive a \$17 cut. I voted **NO**, however, voters will have the final say in November.

Seahawks Stadium — Paul Allen has said that he will purchase the Seattle Seahawks if voters approve a funding plan to construct a new stadium. Lawmakers responded by placing a measure on the June ballot to build a new stadium using proceeds from an extension of the King County hotel-motel tax, new lottery games, and a \$100 million contribution by Mr. Allen. I voted **YES**, and voters will decide during a June statewide special election.

Workforce Training — Lawmakers severely cut back two successful programs that assist displaced workers during their time of need. The Timber Retraining Benefit program provides extended unemployment benefits for dislocated timber and salmon workers, and unemployed workers in rural communities dependent on those industries. Eligibility for this program was chopped by 65 percent from \$60 to \$22 million — eliminating 950 workers in Snohomish County. Also, the Workforce Training Program, funded by unemployment insurance taxes, was re-authorized with a \$10 million cut. I voted **NO**.

Health Care — Without action by the 1997 Legislature, a Medicare premium tax would be levied against Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) effective July 1. Revenue from this tax would be used to fund subsidized health care for the working poor. However, there was a major concern that this tax would be unfairly passed on to senior citizens. Approved by lawmakers, HB 1219 exempts HMO’s from this tax, which is a relief for seniors. I voted **YES**.